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PART I.

IMPORTANT GOVERNMENT ORDERS.

REVENUE SECRETARIAT.

The improvement of the System of Office Procedure and the simplification of work.

READ—

Dewan's minute dated 23rd July 1923, suggesting measures for the simplification of office procedure in the District and other Revenue Offices.

2. Discussions on the subject at the meeting of the Deputy Commissioners and Heads of Departments held during October 1923.

3. Letter No. C. 501, dated 3rd October 1923, from the Revenue Commissioner, submitting his views on the subject, along with those of the Deputy Commissioners.

4. Letter No. C. 1791—23-24, dated 24th November 1923, from the same officer, requesting sanction of Government for the appointment of a clerk on Rs. 60 for the purpose of examining the question of abolishing and revising periodicals and returns.

5. Correspondence ending with letter No. C. 55—24-25, dated 5th July 1924, from the same officer making further suggestions in the matter of the preparation of arrear current registers.

ORDER No. R. 2880-9—L. R. 111-23-6, DATED 10TH NOVEMBER 1924.

Government have had under their consideration for some time past, the question of improving and expediting the despatch of business in revenue offices. The state of work in many of the offices is far from satisfactory, so much so that the question has attracted public attention, and has been recently brought up for discussion in the Representative Assembly. The defects complained of are due partly to the inadequacy of supervision on the part of superior officers, partly to the inefficiency of the ministerial staff, but mainly to the defects of the procedure now followed for the registration of correspondence.

2. Several suggestions have been received as regards the improvement of the system of office procedure and the simplification of work. The most important of them is the modification of the Disposal Number System, which in its present form is found to be too elaborate and cumbersome in certain respects. The Disposal Number System was introduced in the offices of the Revenue Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioners of Districts in the year 1916, and was extended to Revenue Sub-Division Offices in 1918. Though the system has been in force for nearly eight years, it has not tended materially to improve the working of the revenue offices. It was observed by the Dewan during his tours that the registration and record of disposal of correspondence was so unsatisfactory in the offices in which this system has been in force, that it was impossible to obtain any idea of

was found to be partly due to the somewhat complex procedure prescribed in the system. In the first place, the papers are registered a number of times. They are first entered in the Amad Register, then in the Current Register, next in the Personal Register, and finally in the Disposal Register, thus necessitating a great deal of scriptory work. Secondly, the Current Register does not generally give a correct idea of the volume of work in an office, as the entries in this register are not made by the clerks who deal with the papers, and consequently, receipts which should be shown under old currents, are frequently shown as new currents. Thirdly, the arrangements for referencing are unsatisfactory and disposed of papers are not promptly sent to the record room. Indexing which has to be done in the record room is often delayed, and is also not done satisfactorily, as the Record Keeper who has to do the work, is not familiar with the subject matter of the files.

3. The defects mentioned above are not peculiar to the working of the Disposal Number System in Mysore. They have been observed in Madras also. In order to remedy these defects, a modified form of the system has been tried in the Chittoor District in that Presidency. This system, while it retains the advantages of the Disposal Number System, *viz.*, treating a subject and not a paper, as the unit of record, keeping all papers relating to a subject together until it is brought to disposal, and assimilating the unit of registry with the unit of record, is calculated to rectify some of the defects noticed in the Disposal Number System. The chief features of the new system are that the current registers will be maintained by the Disposal clerks, instead of by separate Current Register clerks, and that these Current Registers will themselves be Personal Registers for the Disposal clerks. There will be no separate Disposal Numbers. Each file when disposed of will have its original current number. Indexes will be prepared by the Disposal clerks themselves when the correspondence is first initiated, and not after final disposal, by the Record clerk. Thus the new system aims at minimising scriptory work and assigning the important work of registering and indexing to those who are best able to do it efficiently.

4. A note describing the system in detail slightly modified to suit the requirements of the revenue offices in the State is printed as annexure to this order. Under this system, the office is divided into convenient sections, a clear distribution list showing the number of clerks working in each section and the groups of subjects dealt with by each clerk, being put up. Each section is given a Section Letter, and a number is given to each clerk working in the Section. The Receipt and Despatch Section will be called the Current Section, and placed in charge of a Superintendent. The Tappal has to be opened by the Head of the Office. In the Madras System, only papers the loss of which would be serious in view of their importance are selected and entered in a register called the Distribution Register. In view of the fact that this system is likely to make it difficult to keep track of papers, it is proposed to have a General Receipt Register, wherein all papers received in the office excepting those which are very unimportant, such as Rain fall cards, Plague returns of other provinces, etc., will be entered, and thereafter distributed to the clerks concerned, their signatures being obtained in token of receipt. The clerks then enter the papers in their Personal Registers, which in the new system answer the purpose of the Current Register. All papers relating to old cases will be entered under their proper entries in the Personal Register. When the Disposal Clerk gets a new current, he prepares two Index Slips and sends one to the Superintendent, who maintains a register called New Case Register, in which are entered all new papers received or arising in the office, and the Superintendent gives the paper a number according to the New Case Register, and returns the paper to the clerk. This number is its Current Number. The Index Slip is sent to the Record Room by the Superintendent, where it is filed. The Disposal clerk similarly files the other copy of the Index Slip. Thus at the very outset, a proper index is prepared. When the papers are disposed of, no new number is given, but the fact of disposal is noted on the Index Slip by the Disposal clerk.

5. Under this system a separate Petition Register is not maintained in the Madras Presidency. As, however, the petition rules issued in Government Order No. O. 243-310—G. M. 12-22-1, dated 11th July 1922, require the maintenance of a register for any petition which may be dealt with in the office, a Petition Register should be maintained. In order to avoid the duplication of correspondence, the entry in the Petition Register will be closed whenever the subject dealt with forms part of a correspondence, or as soon as fresh correspondence is initiated from the office. The petition rules will be modified accordingly.

6. Disposals under this system are of 5 kinds, *viz.*, R. D. L. N. F. The disposals classed as R. D. L. are quite similar to the disposals under the Disposal Number System classed as R. D1. D2., with the exception that no new number is given to the papers. After disposal, the letter K. D. or L., is prefixed to the current number. In the case of 'N' disposals, where the file itself is sent out of the office, the letter N. is marked before the current number, and when the papers are filed, the letter F. is marked on them and sent to the Record Room. The nature of the disposal is entered in the disposal column of the Disposal Register, and also on the index, if the disposal is indexed.

7. As soon as a draft of a communication has been approved, the clerk dealing with the file sends the draft office copy to the Superintendent, Current Section, with all enclosures. It is the duty of this official to see that fair copies are prepared, signed and despatched. A Despatch Stamp is stamped on the office copy of the correspondence in token of despatch and in the case of 'N' disposals, on the 'N' reference slip or against the corresponding entry in the New Case Register. After the disposal of the file, it is sent to the Record Keeper by the Superintendent, Current Section, who will note the date and the nature of the disposal. The papers are arranged in the Records in the order of their Current Numbers. Papers not arranged in the Records under R. D. L. bundles according to their current number, but in special bundles according to their subject matter are said to be filed.

9. The opinions of the Revenue Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioners of Districts on the proposal have been obtained and the question was also discussed at a meeting of Deputy Commissioners and Heads of Departments held in October 1923. While the Revenue Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, Kolar District, are in favour of the scheme with a few modifications, most of the Deputy Commissioners are not in favour of the system. Government have carefully considered the matter and are pleased to direct that the system may be introduced in the district of Hassan, both in the District as well as in the Sub-Division Offices, as an experimental measure for a year, with effect from 1st January 1925. The Head Clerk of the District Office will be designated Superintendent, Current Section, in the same grade from the date of the introduction of the scheme. The Revenue Commissioner is requested to report on the working of the system by the end of November 1925. As regards the other offices, the present system will continue, with the modification suggested by the Revenue Commissioner in his letter No. C.55—24-25, dated 5th July 1924, that in bringing forward the arrear currents each year, the elaborate entries, involving much unnecessary scriptory work prescribed by the Disposal Number System may be done away with, and only lists of such references may be prepared and affixed to the New Current Registers for ready reference, further stages of correspondence being noted in the old registers themselves.

10. Another proposal made for simplification of work in the revenue offices is a reduction in the number of registers to be maintained and periodical returns to be prepared in these offices. The total number of registers required to be maintained in the Revenue Accounts Branch of the Deputy Commissioner's Office, according to Appendix 37 of the District Office Manual, is 64, some of which are either a duplication of other registers or are quite unnecessary. It has been suggested that the following registers may conveniently be abolished:—

- I. Appendix 40—Register of sanctioned scale of establishment.
- II. Appendix 47—Register of Permanent Advance.
- III. Appendix 51—Check Register of Travelling Allowance Bills.
- IV. Appendix 57—Register showing lands available for grants, under Large Landed Estates Scheme.
- V. Appendix 62—Register of Salt Pans.
- VI. Appendices 63, 64 and 65—These relate to D.C.B. of Land Revenue, Mohatarfa and Cesses.
- VII. Appendix 66—Register of Arrear Potgi Bills.
- VIII. Appendix 73—Register of Unauthorised alienations of Village Service Inam lands.
- IX. Appendix 74—Register showing D. C. B. of Boundary Marks Charges.
- X. Appendix 75—Register showing the lands proposed to be acquired under the Land Acquisition Regulation.
- XI. Appendix 77—Register of lands acquired and compensation paid therefor.
- XII. Appendix 81—Cash Remittances.
- XIII. Appendix 84—Register of Refund of Court Fees stamps.

The number of reports and returns to be prepared by the Accounts Branch according to Appendix 91 of the District Office Manual is 106. Several of them may be either submitted at longer intervals, or abolished, as noted below:—

- I. Progress Report of Forest Settlements—This may be made half-yearly.
- II. Returns 17, 18 and 19—These relate to cotton goods produced and the export duty, etc., and may be restricted to the districts in which there are cotton mills at present.
- III. Statement of Land Improvement and Takavi Loans sanctioned. May be made quarterly instead of monthly.
- IV. Return of alienated villages. May be made yearly instead of quarterly.
- V. Demand, Collection and Balance Statement of loans under Land Improvement. May be made half-yearly instead of quarterly.
- VI. Statements Nos. 32 to 35. All these may be made yearly, instead of quarterly.

VII. Return No. 36 relating to the property in enemy countries belonging to persons and firms in Mysore State may be abolished.

VIII. Return of dismissed officials may be made annual.

IX. Return of villages and inspection of boundary marks may also be made annual instead of half-yearly.

X. Inspection report of the Taluk Offices may be made annual instead of bi-ennial.

The above suggestions are by no means exhaustive, and Government are of opinion that there is considerable scope for further reduction and simplification under this head. Government desire that particular attention should be given to the matter by the Special Officer proposed to be appointed by them in this connection, and his proposals submitted for the orders of Government as early as possible.

11. The distribution of work at present among the main sections of the District Office is defective and unsatisfactory. The Head Munshi has comparatively little work, whereas the Revenue Head Accountant is burdened with a large volume of work, much of which does not legitimately relate to his section. To remove this inequality, Government direct that all work connected with Darkhasts, Nirsardi, sub-division of survey numbers, as also all registers relating to Barawards and Acquittance Rolls, the checking of Diaries and Travelling Allowance Bills, Cash and contingencies, Appointments and Service Registers, and Pension applications, be transferred from the Accounts Section to the Munshi Branch, the latter being at the same time strengthened by the addition of a clerk or two to be transferred from the Accounts Branch.

12. The Special Finance Committee in 1922 have expressed the view that the volume of work in the various offices can be reduced to an appreciable extent, by a suitable redistribution of duties among the officials and by changing the methods of work. If the modified system of office procedure is brought into force and the reduction and redistribution of work suggested above are adopted, substantial reduction of staff will be possible. The normal strength of the establishment in the District Offices under the new conditions would be as follows :—

- (1) Supervising Section—Sheristedar and one Assistant.
- (2) Current Section—Superintendent and 3 clerks. (In heavy offices, there will be 5 clerks).
- (3) Correspondence Section—Revenue Head Munshi and 3 clerks, (In heavy offices, there will be 4 clerks).
- (4) Accounts Section — Revenue Head Accountant and 6 clerks.
- (5) Judicial Section—2 clerks.
- (6) Records —2 clerks.

Thus it may be possible to retrench 7 clerks in the establishment of the Bangalore District Office, 6 in the Kolar and Mysore District Offices and 5 in other District Offices, exclusive of the Muzrai Establishment, and one clerk uniformly in all the Sub-Division Offices. The Revenue Commissioner considers, however, that these retrenchments cannot be effected without greatly impairing efficiency. In view of the opinion expressed by the Revenue Commissioner, Government do not wish immediately to order any reduction of establishments; but they desire that the details of the distribution of work among the officials in the District and Sub-Division Offices should be thoroughly gone into and the possible retrenchments that can be effected worked out by the Revenue Commissioner in the light of the experience of the New System of registering and of the simplification of work as a result of the reduction in the number of periodical returns and reports referred to above.

13. As regards the Taluk Offices, the simplified form of the Disposal Number System sanctioned in Government Order No. 7201-9—L. R. 155-19-2, dated the 27th December 1919 which was introduced in a few selected taluks is reported to have been generally working satisfactorily; and Government consider that it may be extended to the other taluks. They therefore direct that the system sanctioned in the Government Order of 1919 be extended to all Taluk Offices, with effect from 1st July 1925. The question of introducing into Taluk Offices, the new simplified system mentioned in para 4 *supra* will be considered after watching its working in the District and Sub-Division Offices for some time.

14. It is also necessary to effect improvements in the Land Revenue Accounts maintained in the Taluk Offices. A register showing the entire Jamabandi of the taluk must be opened and the Jamabandi Officer should certify in it the actual figure that he has fixed, copy of the same being sent to the Revenue Commissioner and the Comptroller as soon after the Jamabandi as possible. The registers prescribed for entering the Demand and Collection of Land Revenue are unnecessarily complicated. Appendix No. 25 of the Taluk Manual Part II may be abolished and Appendix No. 26 may be simplified.

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The Demand, Collection and Balance and Pahani accounts also admit of simplification. The Revenue Commissioner is requested to go into the question in detail with the help of the Special Officer and submit proposals for the orders of Government.

15 Government have in their Order No. 3354-62—L. R. 255-22-162, dated 23rd January 1924 directed the abolition of the territorial distribution of work in Sub-Division Offices. As regards Taluk Offices also, it is observed that the distribution of work by hoblis is inconvenient and unsatisfactory, as it does not enable the Head of the Office readily to get at the state of any particular item of work in the whole taluk. Government therefore direct that this system may be abolished and the work distributed among the Taluk officials by subjects, and not by hoblis.

16. The Revenue Commissioner has proposed a special form of reminder to be used in cases of serious delay. The form, which is intended as a "means for locating exactly with whom a reference is actually pending," practically initiates a regular enquiry into the causes for the delay, and it will involve considerable time and labour to fill up. Government consider that it is not suitable for ordinary use or for securing prompt replies. A much better method would be to prepare lists of cases which have not been disposed of in spite of 3 reminders and send them down to the subordinate officers concerned for an explanation of the causes for the delay. This can be regularly done with the greatest ease from the personal ledgers of the clerks. Government direct that this system be adopted in all offices.

17. With reference to the suggestion made at the Representative Assembly Session of October 1923, that calendars as in criminal cases may be prescribed in respect of Revenue Suits, appeals, Land Acquisition Cases, etc.; Government consider that this system will involve heavy writing work and that it will not be necessary if inspecting officers scrutinise not merely the pending cases, but also the cases disposed of with reference to the time taken up for, and the manner of, disposal.

18. Government are also of opinion that the elaborate forms of questions and answers in force at present for the inspection of the several offices are too cumbersome. They tend to make inspection purely a matter of routine and mechanical. They may be suitable enough as a guide for inspection by the presiding officers themselves, but as regards higher officers, Government consider that Inspection Reports need not be in the prescribed form. It would be enough if a memorandum of the main points to which attention should be directed is given in the Inspection Notes. It appears also unnecessary to send up detailed Inspection Reports to higher officers unless there is really anything special requiring to be brought to their notice or disciplinary action has to be taken by the higher authorities. There should be a record of inspection, and it is enough that that record is maintained in the office of the inspecting officer, and if the office inspected is a subordinate office, in such office also, and is referred to at subsequent inspections by the same inspecting officer.

19. The Revenue Commissioner is requested to issue such subsidiary instructions as he may consider necessary to give effect to this order and to submit copies of the same for the information of Government.

K. V. ANANTARAMAN,
Secretary to Government,
Revenue Department.